

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

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O R 081613Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2319

INFO DIA WASHDC

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR OCLR UR US

SUBJECT: MFA DENIES PERMISSION FOR APRIL 8-9 SUPPORT FLIGHT

1. SUMMARY. ON APRIL 7, MFA REFUSED PERMISSION FOR APRIL 8-9 AMBASSADORIAL SUPPORT FLIGHT, INDICATING THAT EMBASSY'S PLAN TO USE DC-9 INSTEAD OF DC-6 WAS THE CAUSE FOR TURN-DOWN. WE DISCUSSED MATTER IN DETAIL WITH FEDOSEYEV AT MFA APRIL 8. END SUMMARY.

2. DEPUTY HEAD OF USA SECTION OF MFA FEDOSEYEV CALLED ADCM BREMENT AT NOON APRIL 8 AND TOLD HIM THAT IN CONNECTION WITH STATEMENT MADE BY DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KORNIENKO TO AMBASSADOR APRIL 7, HE COULD NOW STATE THAT MFA "COULD FAVORABLY CONSIDER" AMBASSADORIAL SUPPORT FLIGHT ON DC-6 AIRPLANE. BREMENT REPLIED THAT, AS EXPLAINED PREVIOUSLY, DC-6 WAS SIMPLY NOT AVAILABLE AND SUPPORT FLIGHT WOULD THEREFORE HAVE TO BE CANCELLED.

3. BREMENT, ACCOMPANIED BY EMBOFF, SUBSEQUENTLY CALLED ON FEDOSEYEV AFTERNOON APRIL 8 TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER AS WELL AS TO PRESENT NOTE PROTESTING LATEST ROUND OF HARASSMENT AGAINST EMBASSY PERSONNEL (SEPTTEL). ON SUPPORT FLIGHT, BREMENT

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EXPLAINED THAT LAST-MINUTE CANCELLATION OF PLANE HAD

CAUSED GREAT INCONVENIENCE TO EMBASSY PERSONNEL AND THAT AMBASSADOR WAS PERSONALLY INCONVENIENCED AND DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER WAY THIS SITUATION HAD COME ABOUT. EMBASSY FRANKLY FOUND SOVIET POSITION PERPLEXING AND HOPED MATTER COULD QUICKLY BE RECTIFIED. WE TRUSTED PROBLEM WAS ADMINISTRATIVE AND IN NO WAY CONNECTED WITH HARASSMENT OF U.S. DIPLOMATS IN MOSCOW, ALTHOUGH MANY PEOPLE IN EMBASSY FELT THAT LATTER WAS THE CASE. BREMENT THEN READ TEXT OF NON-PAPER (GIVEN BELOW), WHICH WAS LEFT WITH FEDOSEYEV.

4. FEDOSEYEV RESPONDED THAT MATERIAL SUPPLIED WAS "HELPFUL" AND STATED THAT HE WOULD REPORT THIS CONVERSATION TO HIS SUPERIORS, PROMPTLY, ALTHOUGH HE COULD NOT SAY WHAT THE FINAL DECISION WOULD BE. HE INDICATED HE PERSONALLY HAD NOT REALIZED THAT DC-9 WAS NO LARGER THAN THE DC-6. ADCM NOTED THE EMBASSY WOULD BE GLAD TO PROVIDE THE MFA WITH FURTHER INFORMATION AND TO COOPERATE FULLY IN RESOLVING THIS MATTER SPEEDILY.

5. TEXT OF THE EMBASSY'S APRIL 8 NON-PAPER FOLLOWS:
BEGIN TEXT.

THE EMBASSY REQUESTED SOVIET PERMISSION FOR AN AMBASSADORIAL SUPPORT FLIGHT BY LETTER TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON MARCH 29, 1976. THE EMBASSY'S LETTER STATED THAT THE FLIGHT WOULD ARRIVE IN MOSCOW ON APRIL 8 AND DEPART ON APRIL 9. THE LETTER ALSO STATED THAT A DC-9 AIRCRAFT WOULD BE USED. HAVING RECEIVED NO RESPONSE FROM THE MINISTRY AS OF THE MORNING OF APRIL 7, THE EMBASSY CONTACTED THE MINISTRY BY TELEPHONE TO LEARN THAT THE SOVIET SIDE WAS UNWILLING TO GRANT PERMISSION FOR THE APRIL 8-9 FLIGHT, APPARENTLY BECAUSE OF THE TYPE OF PLANE THE EMBASSY PROPOSED TO USE. THE LAST MOMENT CANCELLATION OF THIS FLIGHT CAUSED CONSIDERABLE INCONVENIENCE TO EMBASSY PERSONNEL IN WESTERN EUROPE AWAITING RETURN TO MOSCOW. MORE SERIOUSLY, IT CAUSED THE DELAY OF MEDICAL TREATMENT IN WESTERN EUROPE OF 15 EMBASSY EMPLOYEES, ONE OF WHOM WAS GRAVELY ILL, WHO WERE SCHEDULED TO DEPART MOSCOW ON THE SUPPORT FLIGHT APRIL 9. DURING THE MORNING OF APRIL 8, THE EMBASSY WAS INFORMED THAT THE SOVIET SIDE HAD NO OBJECTION TO SUPPORT FLIGHTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHICH USED THE DC-6 AIRCRAFT. AS EXPLAINED TO THE MINISTRY ON APRIL 7, AND REITERATED APRIL 8, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT NO LONGER UTILIZES THE DC-6 IN EUROPE, AND IT WAS CONSEQUENTLY NOT POSSIBLE TO GO AHEAD WITH THE AMBASSADORIAL FLIGHT AS SCHEDULED. PERHAPS THERE WAS SOME MISUNDERSTANDING ON THE SOVIET SIDE REGARDING THE NATURE OF THE DC-9 AIRCRAFT THE EMBASSY PROPOSED TO USE FOR THE APRIL 8-9

FLIGHT. THE EMBASSY HAS HAD A NUMBER OF CONVERSATIONS OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS CONCERN-INT THE GROUND RULES FOR SUPPORT FLIGHTS, NAMELY, THAT THE PLANE MUST BE FOR THE AMBASSADOR'S PERSONAL USE, AND MUST HAVE AN IDENTICAL CIVILIAN COUNTERPART. THIS WAS SPECIFICALLY REAFFIRMED, FOR EXAMPLE, BY DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KORNIYENKO TO AMBASSADOR STOESSEL ON JUNE 4, 1975. THE EMBASSY HAD THESE POINTS IN MIND WHEN IT SELECTED THE DC-9 TO REPLACE THE DC-6 AIRCRAFT PREVIOUSLY USED FOR THESE FLIGHTS.

THE DC-9 HAS FOR SOME TIME BEEN REGULARLY FLOWN IN THE USSR BY AUSTRIAN AIRLINES, SWISSAIR, FINNAIR, AND SAS. IT THUS CONFORMS TO THE SOVIET DESIRE THAT THE TYPE OF AIRCRAFT SELECTED FOR SUPPORT FLIGHTS BE USED FOR CIVILIAN AS WELL AS MILITARY PURPOSES. AS THE FOLLOWING TABLE SHOWS, THE DC-9 IS CONSIDERABLY SMALLER IN CARGO AND PASSENGER CAPACITY THAN THE DC-6, IS ROUGHLY EQUAL IN LENGTH, HAS A SMALLER WING-SPAN AND LOWER HEIGHT. ITS MARKINGS ARE IDENTICAL TO THOSE ON THE DC-6: THE LETTERS "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA" AND A SMALL AMERICAN FLAG. INDEED, THE EMBASSY SELECTED THE DC-9 BECAUSE OF ITS PHYSICAL COMPARABILITY WITH THE DC-6, IN LIGHT OF POSSIBLE SOVIET SENSITIVITIES REGARDING THE SIZE AND GENERAL APPEARANCE OF U.S. AIRCRAFT USED FOR SUPPORT FLIGHTS. COMPARATIVE DATA ON THE DC-6 PREVIOUSLY USED, AND THE DC-9 WE PROPOSED TO USE, ARE AS FOLLOWS:

	DC-6	DC-9
LENGTH:	106' 9"	110.3'
WING SPAN:	117.5'	93.3'
CREW:	8-10	5
PASSENGER SEATS:	40	32
CARGO CAPACITY	12,000 LBS	3,000-3,600 LBS
CARGO CAPACITY WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE		

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MAX. PASSENGER LOAD:	3,000 LBS	1,500-2,000 LBS.
POWER PLANT:	4 RECIPROCATING	2 JET ENGINES
	ENGINES	

THE EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE CLARIFICATION OF CURRENT SOVIET POLICY REGARDING AMBASSADORAL SUPPORT FLIGHTS, SO THAT FURTHER INCONVENIENCE TO THE EMBASSY AND ITS PERSONNEL CAN BE AVOIDED AND SO THAT MORE SERIOUS QUESTIONS DO NOT ARISE. END TEXT.
STOESSEL

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